

# Foreign Service Institute

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## A NOTE TO SPEAKERS INVITED TO ADDRESS THE ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS COURSE

The current Administrative Operations Course (M-410) is the eleventh cycle of a course inaugurated in 1955 at the Foreign Service Institute. This eight-week course, offered twice a year, is available to intermediate grade Foreign Service officers (FSO-4-6). Assignments to the class are made by the Office of Personnel. Factors considering assignment to this course include past experience, potential administrative aptitude, prospective assignment in the administrative area and availability timing.

Some officers attending the course have had extensive service in one or more phases of the administrative function. While this is a desired prerequisite, occasionally officers are assigned who have served only in the substantive area. All officers, however, have considerable overseas experience. The average length of service abroad for the fifteen members of the last class was eight years.

The Course Chairman considers that graduates should be able to assume over-all responsibilities of the administrative function at a small or medium size post, consistent with previous experience and aptitude. Although the practical application of administration is stressed, several sessions are devoted to broader vistas encompassing managerial concepts and supervisory principles as they may be applied by field personnel.

The small size of the class (averaging twelve officers) allows for full group participation and an informal atmosphere. Students are expected to enter into class discussions, posing questions to speakers and offering comments in light of their own experiences. Such active participation provides benefit to both students and visiting speakers.

Although some discussions must necessarily be devoted primarily to the Washington level of operation, speakers are reminded that the officers attending this course will be proceeding abroad to the position of administrative officer or other position of responsibility in the administrative function at a Foreign Service post. Speakers are encouraged to take this opportunity to explain how field personnel can better assist them in their particular areas of responsibility, thus promoting a stronger

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and more efficient administrative operation within the Department and Foreign Service. Since the graduate of this class will be the individual most called upon in the field to explain the Department's administrative rules and procedures, speakers are encouraged to provide information to the class which will enable members to understand and fully appreciate the reasoning which affects such policies and concepts. Inclusion of legislative and other considerations affecting the establishment of a program as well as other background informational material in a speaker's address is not only appropriate but worthwhile.

Since this course must necessarily be programmed many weeks in advance, it is inevitable that some of the speakers invited to address this group must cancel their talk owing to circumstances beyond their control. This fact is explained to students. Nevertheless, many officers attending past classes have pointed with concern to the number of substitute speakers who often arrive ill-prepared and not particularly conversant with their subject. The Course Chairman suggests that speakers obliged to send another person in their place fully brief the individual on the topics to be covered during the presentation. The Course Chairman requests that he be informed in advance whenever a substitution is contemplated.

The Foreign Service Institute continually strives to improve the courses offered in its curriculum. The Administrative Operations Course has undergone many changes since it was first inaugurated. Speakers invited to the course are considered to be officers having a thorough and all-encompassing knowledge of the area which they will discuss. The Course Chairman is greatly appreciative of the extra effort and time spent by speakers in preparation of their presentations, and welcomes any suggestions from them for further improvement in the course program.

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